

XP-1051

PATENT

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 9 are pending. Claims 2-8 and 10-16 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

No new subject matter has been added to the specification.

The Invention

The invention of the amended claims 1 and 9 is a novel, non-obvious and useful device and method directed towards capturing a slip sheet (used to separate printing plates in a stack), and then moving or removing the slip sheet from the underlying printing plate.

Support for the amended claims is found in the specification as hereinafter indicated. A cassette of printing plates is raised so that a top slip sheet comes into contact with a slip sheet mechanism 110, more specifically coming into contact with a foot pad 132 and a drive roller 136 (p. 13, lines 19-20; p. 14, lines 3-4, FIG. 8D). The drive roller 136 and a follower roller 134 together form a nip, where the drive roller 136 rotates along the top planar surface of the slip sheet SS to fold and draw a portion (p. 14, lines 20-21; see path A, FIG. 8D) of the planar top surface of the slip sheet SS upward into the nip in a direction tangential to an intersection of the drive and follower rollers. The slip sheet SS is thus gripped by the nip. The plate cassette 210 is then lowered (p. 15, lines 3-4) away from the slip sheet capture mechanism. Next a pivot arm 332 moves along an arcuate path (p. 15, lines 7-9), moving the slip sheet capture mechanism 110 (which includes the foot pad 132, drive roller 136, follower roller 134) and the slip sheet SS still gripped by the nip of the rollers. This action completely removes the slip sheet SS from the plate and the cassette 210 (see FIG. 8E).

The Rejections

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Claims 6-8, 10 and 14-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Claims 5 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 in view of Japanese Publication no. 59-102733 and further in view of Japanese Publication no. 56-108641. These rejections are respectfully rendered moot by the cancellation of the claims at issue.

Claims 1-4, 9-12 and 14-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) in view of Larsen et al. Claims 1-3, 9-11, 14 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) in view of Japanese Publication no. 59-102733. These rejections are respectfully traversed by the amendments to the claims as discussed below.

None of the references cited discloses, describes or suggests a drive roller and a follower roller forming a nip whereby the drive roller engages and rotates along a planar top surface of the slip sheet to fold and draw a portion of the planar top surface into the nip between the rollers in a direction tangential to an intersection of the drive and follower rollers, causing the nip to grip the slip sheet, whereby the plate cassette is thereafter lowered away from the slip sheet capture mechanism, and a pivot arm moves both the slip sheet capture mechanism and the slip sheet attached thereto along an arcuate path.

In order to sustain a §102 rejection of independent claims 1 and 9, each and every feature of the claims must be taught by the reference. Since none of the references cited discloses the specific features claimed and noted above, the rejections are overcome.

In determining a prima facie case for obviousness under 35 U.S.C. §103, it is necessary to show that the combination of prior art teachings is proper, and that those teachings are sufficient to suggest making the claimed modifications to one of ordinary skill in the art. Each of the features recited in claims 1 and 9 is not described or suggested in any of the cited references, so any combination thereof would not result in the claimed invention.

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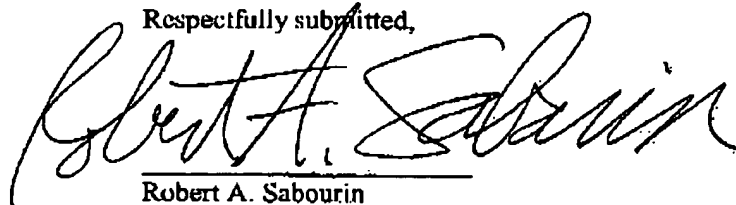
The prior art made of record and not relied upon has been reviewed but is not considered material to the patentability of the invention.

No fees are due with this response. However, if an error has been made in the fee calculations, please charge any excess fees due and credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 13-3377 under this general authorization.

It should be noted that the above arguments are directed towards certain patentable distinctions between the claims and the prior art cited. However, the patentable distinctions between the pending claims and the prior art cited are not necessarily limited to those discussed above.

In view of the foregoing remarks and amendments, it is respectfully submitted that each rejection of the Office Action has been addressed and overcome so that this application is now in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the application, withdraw the rejections and/or objections, and pass the application to issue. Should questions arise during examination, the Examiner is welcome to contact the applicant's attorney as listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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